

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-23 are pending in the present application. New claim 23 is added by the present amendment.

Initially, Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representatives on January 20, 2004. During the interview the patentability of the pending claims over the cited references was discussed. Arguments presented during the interview are reiterated below.

Also, it is noted the specification is amended to correct minor informalities. It is believed no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1, 8, 11, 13-18, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by De La Huerga; and claims 2-7, 9, 10, 12, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over De La Huerga in view of Eggleston.

Claims 1, 8, 11, 13-18, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by De La Huerga. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to an information searching apparatus including "...a data base for storing location information which is about prescribed content information that exists on the network and is unpublished on the network." The information searching apparatus also includes "a searching unit searching for the location information by referring to the database only when searching for the location based on a keyword that is transmitted from a user's terminal apparatus...", support for which is found in the originally filed specification at least at page 5, lines 13-16 and in FIG. 13, step S53. Independent claims 8, 11, 13-18 and 21-23 include similar features. It is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn because De La Huerga does not teach or suggest at least these features.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 1 shows "the locations unpublished information transmitting unit 22 transmits content information, of which the location on a network 5 is unpublished, to the user's terminal apparatus 3 corresponding to a request issued by the user's terminal apparatus 3, when a keyword is input to the search keyword input field of the web page browsed on the user's terminal apparatus 3..." (see the specification at page 9, line 21 to page 10, line 7).

As an advantage, to search unpublished content data, a user repeatedly browses particular web pages on which the user can search information. Thus, when advertisements are placed on such web pages, since the user frequently sees them, the advertisement efficiency improves (see the specification at page 12, lines 14-24).

In contrast, De La Huerga merely discusses a system in which only published information is linked with a keyword by a word processor (see column 4, lines 2-14). Moreover, De La Huerga discusses that "the invention provides the capability to store data records so that they are accessible only to the creator, and to 'publish' data records so that they are available to other users on the system. Storage without publication would typically be for the purpose of reopening and modifying a data record which is not complete" (see De La Huerga at column 9, lines 55-60). Therefore, as De La Huerga does not teach or suggest at least searching for location information about unpublished content information, as in the independent claims, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

Moreover, De La Huerga does not teach or suggest searching for location information by referring to a database of unpublished content information only when searching for the location based on a keyword that is transmitted from a user's terminal apparatus, as in independent claim 1. Rather, De La Huerga discusses at column 4, lines 1-7 that a storage location is allocated to a record only after it is "published," and specifies at column 10, lines 30-43 that only a report which is published can be retrieved and viewed by entering a keyword, in contrast to the independent claims.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted the independent claims patentably distinguish over De La Huerga for at least these reasons.

Claims 2-7, 9, 10, 12, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over De La Huerga in view of Eggleston. This rejection is also respectfully traversed.

Claims 2-7, 9, 10, 12, 19 and 20 depend on the independent claims, which as discussed are believed to patentably distinguish over De La Huerga. Further, Eggleston merely discusses "a new incentive program and award system...to provide consumer access to expanded incentive programs using a conventional computer, to permit sponsors to build, buy, store, modify, offer, track and administer incentive programs and to permit sponsors and retailers to offer improved award fulfillment for participants in incentive programs" (see column 5, lines 47-54), and also does not teach or suggest at least the features of the independent claims.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection also be withdrawn.

In addition, new claim 23 is added to set forth the invention in a varying scope. New claim 23 is similar to claims 1, 2 and 6, and includes features of a determining unit which determines whether an award entry keyword has been input to an award entry keyword input field, in which the award entry keyword is changed whenever a search keyword input field is transmitted to a user. Support for these features is found in the originally filed specification at least at page 15, lines 16-22. It is respectfully submitted that neither De La Huerga nor Eggleston teach or suggest these features, and new claim 23 is allowable for this reason in addition to the reasons discussed regarding independent claim 1.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and view of the present amendment this application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 2/10/4

By: 
J. Randall Beckers
Registration No. 30,358

1201 New York Ave, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501